



SECTION: Administrative

POLICY: AD 10

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BUSINESS CONTINUITY POLICY

PREAMBLE

Creating and maintaining a Business Continuity Plan will ensure that Contact Brant has the resources and information needed to deal with emergencies. An emergency can impose overwhelming demands and/or significantly restrict access to resources, which include human, material, information, and expertise.

Every organization is at risk from potential disasters including natural disasters (e.g., tornadoes, floods, blizzards, fire); accidents and threats; sabotage; power and energy disruptions; communications, transportation, safety, and service sector failure; environmental disasters (e.g., pollution, hazardous material spills); or cyber-attacks and hacker activity. Also refer to the Health and Safety Policy, *Emergency Preparedness and Response*.

POLICY

Contact Brant will have a Business Continuity Plan in place to identify the resources, procedures and information needed to deal with emergencies.

Employees will be familiar with and prepared to follow the Business Continuity Plan to ensure service delivery to clients as soon as possible following any emergency and/or disaster.

PROCEDURE

1. Annually, the Chief Executive Officer will review with the Board the potential risks that are most likely to occur. Following are those risks deemed most likely to occur, and requiring risk management through the Business Continuity Plan:
 - 1.1. Natural and Other Emergency situations including tornadoes, earthquakes, blizzards, and fire
 - 1.2. Accidents including medical emergencies
 - 1.3. Major Power and Energy disruptions
 - 1.4. Infectious Diseases/ Pandemics
 - 1.5. Technological disruptions.
2. Employees are responsible to mitigate any risks by identifying any potential threats and solutions, both in the on-going risk management and in the case of an actual emergency, to their Supervisor.

3. Following are the sections of the Business Continuity Plan to be addressed:
 - A. Governance to outline roles and responsibilities
 - B. Business Impact Analysis
 - C. Plans for Business Continuity
 - D. Readiness Procedures – Refer to the *Emergency Preparedness and Response Policy*.
 - E. Quality assurance
 - F. Emergency Response Plan.

A. Governance

1. The Chief Executive Officer will annually review the Business Continuity Plan with the Board of Director's and ensure the Plan addresses the risks most likely to occur as well as the essential services and resources that are required to continue operations.
 - 2.1 The Chief Executive Officer, Managers and the Executive Assistant will be responsible for the oversight, initiation, testing and audit of the Business Continuity Plan in communication with the Chair of the Board or alternate.
2. During any emergency, the Board of Directors should be prepared to meet more frequently to address issues arising from the emergency. The Board should make recommendations on the overall course of action based on the information regarding operations received from the Chief Executive Officer, or alternate, who is responsible to monitor the situation daily; act as an emergency resource to the Chief Executive Officer, or alternate; and help to determine the substance of news releases for on-going interruptions.
3. The Chief Executive Officer must ensure information is up to date and provided to the Board of Directors to help inform decision making.
4. It is the intention of Contact Brant to operate in accordance with existing policies and procedures, both governance and operational.

B. Business Impact Analysis

1. The Chief Executive Officer will annually ensure employees review the Business Impact Analysis to recommend to the Board the organization's critical business services and the priority of services for continuous service delivery and rapid recovery, as well as identifying internal and external impacts of disruptions.
2. Identifying the critical business services that must be delivered is based on the Contact Brant Mission Statement and the severity of impact a disruption could cause; prioritization of the services is also based on the anticipated minimal time of recovery needed to continue these services after a disruption and a potential loss of revenue that otherwise could be caused. Following are the identified critical business services:
 - 2.2 Coordination of services for families may be especially important during a community disaster, especially for those most in need; the Case Resolution function may need to be implemented to address individuals at risk. Coordination supports could be implemented at a minimum once communication systems are available.

- 2.3 Information, especially general information provided by the municipality or province, may be especially important during a community disaster and Contact Brant, as a recognized access point and manager of the Information Database utilized by 211, may be able to play a key role. Information services could be implemented at a minimum once communication systems are available.
 - 2.4 Intake and referral to appropriate services to be responsive to families and community partners, may be especially important during a community disaster where families will experience increased stress. Intake and referral could be implemented at a minimum once communication systems are available, or staff are able to travel to meeting sites.
 - 2.5 Payment of the organization's bills, including employees' salaries, should be completed in a timely fashion. This could be implemented at a minimum once communication systems are available.
3. Internal resources may further impact the disruption and need to be considered in each situation, including but not limited to: employee availability, corporate assets (facilities, computers, computer applications, data), financial (additional expenses related to implementing the continuity plan, length of time of emergency), and intangible losses (damage to reputation).
 4. External factors may further impact disruptions and need to be considered in each situation, including but not limited to: suppliers, support services (security, technology support, phone and internet suppliers), finance institutions, transportation, insurance providers, government services, legal services, health and safety services, other community services).

C. Plans for Business Continuity

1. At a minimum, the following business options should be maintained or resumed as soon as possible:
 - Phone reception
 - Provision of Information, including management of the Community Information website to ensure updated records for the community and 211
 - Intake and Referral
 - Service Coordination including Case Resolution for complex needs, and
 - Financial Accountability including payments and financial statements.
2. In the case of any temporary closures of the Contact Brant office, employees are expected to complete work at home or an alternate location, wherever possible:
 - Employees are provided with home office equipment including an office or cell phone and computer.
 - The Executive Assistant, or alternate, will ensure that the answering machine message is changed to reflect that the office is temporarily closed and the reason, with anticipated timelines for re-opening.
 - The Executive Assistant will post a notice on the Contact Brant website indicating the office is temporarily closed and the reason, with anticipated timelines for re-opening.
 - The Community Information website can continue to be updated, helping to disseminate information.

- The Chief Executive Officer, or alternate, will communicate with staff about the temporary closure and when the Contact Brant office will re-open.
3. Recovery arrangements should be made with external contractors including telecommunications, IT Supports, backup systems:
 - 3.1 The contracted IT Support, as well as web-based databases EMHware and Community Information, provide offsite backup and should be expected to make systems and records available to employees as soon as possible, according to the contractual agreements.
 - 3.2 Employees can access email and the databases from off-site with passwords through agency home office equipment, which may make it possible to carry on services quite quickly if access to the office site is limited. Employees should work from their home if the Contact Brant office site is not accessible or usable.
 - 3.3 Intake information including the Common Tool for Intake and associated information and forms can be completed utilizing paper copies if access to the database is not available. Data can be input at a later date.
 - 3.4 Referral packages to agencies can be handwritten or typed as a Word document if the database is not available.
 - 3.5 Meetings can be held by teleconference, videoconference, or at other sites.
 - 3.6 All employees are expected to participate in the process of rebuilding following an emergency, to the best of their ability.
 4. The Chief Executive Officer will ensure an alternate location for services if the office site is not accessible for an extended period of time after any emergency or disaster.
 - 4.1. The Chief Executive Officer will annually review the Business Continuity Plan and Emergency Response and Preparedness Policies with employees to ensure preparedness in case of an emergency.
 - 4.2. All employees are expected to use reasonable judgment on how to respond in case of an emergency, follow Contact Brant policies and procedures, and participate in an annual review of the Business Continuity Plan to be prepared for emergency situations to assist in the organization's response.
 5. The Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Board of Directors, will ensure adequate insurance, health and safety policies and procedures, staff training, and workplace health and safety measures are in place to minimize the organization's risks, as well as to minimize the time that services are not available.

D. Readiness Procedures

1. Refer to the *Emergency Preparedness and Response Policy*.
2. The Chief Executive Officer will annually review the Business Continuity Plan and Emergency Response and Preparedness Policy with employees to ensure preparedness in case of an emergency.

3. All employees are expected to use reasonable judgment on how to respond in case of an emergency, follow Contact Brant policies and procedures, and participate in an annual review of the Business Continuity Plan to be prepared for emergency situations to assist in the organization's response.

E. Quality Assurance

1. Following any emergency, the Chief Executive Officer will facilitate a review of the response by both employees and the Board, and incorporate recommendations into new business practices, policies, and procedures.
2. Employees and the Board should build on any experiences in disruptions of service, including occasional interruptions or closures due to weather, brief power outages, and the agency's 2008, 2012 and 2024 moves to new sites.
3. The Chief Executive Officer will facilitate an annual review with both employees and the Board regarding the business and operational practices.

F. Emergency Response Plan

1. The Chief Executive Officer will ensure that an Emergency Response Plan is posted (Appendix 1). The Emergency Response Plan shall apply to Contact Brant employees, volunteers, and visitors on, in, or around the premises.
2. The Emergency Response Plan will include procedures for Fire, Natural Disasters, Bomb Threats, Water/Heat/Utility Disruptions, and Missing Persons.
3. Employees need to be aware that the Emergency Response Plan may need to be provided in a format that takes into consideration individual needs, as well as that supports may be required to some individuals in emergency situations.
 - 4.1 Employees will work with the individual, as soon as practicable, to identify solutions and options that take into consideration their needs. Alternative options include but are not limited to enlarged text; communication support either in person or over the phone; ensuring the individual's support person is aware of the Plan.
4. **Emergency Survival Kit:** One of the best ways to prepare for an emergency, regardless of the type, is to prepare an Emergency Survival Kit. As a best practice, emergency survival kits should include enough supplies to survive for 72 hours. The Emergency Survival Kit includes:
 - Flashlights
 - Cell phones that will work in a power outage
 - A well-stocked First Aid kit (located in kitchen area); the First Aid Station has additional specific supplies and is located in the kitchen cupboards
 - Manual can opener (located in the kitchen)



Emergency Response Plan

Employees need to be aware that the Emergency Response Plan may need to be provided in a format that takes into consideration individual needs, as well as that supports may be required to some individuals in emergency situations.

Contact Brant employees will work with the individual, as soon as practicable, to identify solutions and options that take into consideration their needs. Alternative options include but are not limited to: communication support either in person or over the phone; documents provided via email or website; ensuring the individual's support person is aware of the Plan; documents provided in enlarged text or Braille.

FIRE Emergency Response Plan Procedures:

If you hear a fire alarm, all individuals in or around the premises will:

- Remain calm and encourage others to remain calm.
- Evacuate the building immediately, using the nearest and safest exit.
- Close all doors behind you as you leave.
- Report to the designated "Emergency Evacuation Area" (corner of Colborne Street and Wahrfe Street).
- Immediately report employees or visitors who have remained in the building.
- Dial 9-1-1 to notify the authorities - follow any and all instructions. Provide your name, correct address of the fire (255 Colborne Street, Units 1 & 2, Brantford, N3T 2H3) and the location of the fire in the building.
- Use the fire extinguisher *only if deemed safe to use rather than exit the building.*
- *Do not return into the building until it has been declared safe to do so by the Fire Department.*

If you are unable to leave the area or building due to fire or heavy smoke:

- Remain calm.
- Close all doors to prevent the entry of smoke and fire.
- Dial 911 to notify the authorities and inform them of who and where you are.
- Signal to the Fire Fighters, by any means possible, to draw attention to you.
- If possible, seal all cracks where smoke can get in.
- Crouch low to the floor if smoke begins to enter your area.
- Move to the nearest protected location in the room or area.
- Wait to be rescued and remain calm.
- Do not leave the area.
- Do not panic.
- Listen for instructions or information which may be given by authorized personnel.

NATURAL DISASTERS Emergency Response Plan Procedures:

A "weather watch" means that conditions are favourable for severe weather to develop.

A "weather warning" means that severe weather has been sighted in the vicinity.

- Remain calm and encourage others to remain calm in a weather warning.
- Account for all employees and visitors ensuring that everyone is safely inside the facility.
- Close doors.
- Move away from windows and doors.
- Gather in windowless or other enclosed areas.
- Listen to weather reports for updates and instructions.
- Do not leave the area until the weather warning has been lifted.

POWER Disruptions Procedures:

In the event of a major power outage:

- Remain calm and encourage others to remain calm.
- Gather flashlights and other needed supplies.
- Check on all employees and visitors to ensure their safety.
- If the power outage is prolonged, the Chief Executive Officer or designate will consider sending everyone home for the remainder of the day.

In the case of other utility disruptions, all attempts will be made to determine the cause of the disruption and the probable length of shutdown. Where required, the local utility provider shall be contacted to assess and resolve the situation. If the shutdown is prolonged, dismissing employees for the day shall be considered by management.

Bomb Threats; Chemical, Biological, Nuclear Hazards Procedures:

In the event of a bomb threat, or if a contaminant, virus, or other harmful agent poses an immediate threat, all employees and visitors are to:

- Remain calm and encourage others to remain calm.
- Evacuate the building immediately.
- Report to the designated "Emergency Evacuation Area".
- Dial 9-1-1 to notify the authorities and follow any and all instructions.

MISSING PERSON Procedures:

During an emergency, ensure that all necessary steps are taken when an employee or visitor cannot be accounted for:

- Two individuals, usually the CEO or designate, will engage in a systematic search, both inside and immediately outside the premises, if safe to do so.
- Should a search of the premises prove unsuccessful or not be safe to complete, call 9-1-1 and provide a description of the missing person, or a photograph.
- Emergency Responders will assume control of the search at this point.
- All previously contacted persons and law enforcement shall be notified if the missing person turns up due to search or of their own accord.